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Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, March 9, 1932

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Cheese Facts" Approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Menu and Recipe from the Bureau.

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"Uncle Ebenezer," I said the otherday, "you are a wise man, and one for whose knowledge I have the greatest respect. What do you know about the history of cheese?"

"Cheese," said Uncle Ebenezer, thoughtfully, "well. I know that cheese has been one of man's most sustaining foods, since the earliest days of the world's history. I know that Old Parr, a man who is said to have lived to be over a hundred and fifty years of age, was of the opinion:

'That green cheese was most wholesome with an onion,
Coarse Mechlin bread; and for his daily swig,
Milk, buttermilk, and water, whey or whig.'

"That's interesting," I said. "Do you suppose the green cheese and onions were responsible for his ripe old age?"

"As to that," said Uncle Ebenezer, "I cannot say. I also know that the onion has been highly esteemed, as an article of food, from the earliest times. A long time ago, onions were used in desert regions by travelers and soldiers, to prevent thirst. The onion--"

"There!" I interrupted him, "I didn't ask you about onions -- I want information about cheese. Do you know that fully three-fourths of our domestic cheese is the Cheddar variety; we also produce smaller quantities of Swiss, Limburg, Brick, Munster, and Cream cheese. The imported cheese includes the higher priced cheese, such as the Emmenthaler from Switzerland; Parmesan and Gorgonzola from Italy; Roquefort, Camembert, and Brie from France; and Edam from Holland. Did you know that?"

"No," admitted Uncle Ebenezer, "where did you learn so much all at once?"

"Never mind. Let me finish. Ordinarily, cheese is classified as either hard or soft. The most common soft unripened cheeses are cottage, cream, and Neufchatel, which must be eaten fresh. Then there are numerous soft ripened cheeses, such as the Camembert, Liederkranz, and Limberg, which may be kept for a longer period. Of course, if Limberger cheese is kept too long --"

"I know," said Uncle Ebenezer. "I know just exactly what you mean. Once, when I was baking, I kept a Limberg cheese too long, and I've never forgotten it. Why, that cheese --"

"Never mind," I said again. "I'm not through with my talk yet. Did you know that Cheddar cheese and Swiss cheese are the most popular raw cheeses? In salads, we use cream cheese, Neufchatel, and Roquefort, and cottage cheese. Cottage cheese is simple, wholesome, economical, and attractive. What is more appetizing than a salad of snowy white cottage cheese, on green lettuce, with a good dressing, and a few strips of pimento and a dash of paprika for garnishing? And then, what's better, in salad dressing, than a bit of piquant flavored Roquefort cheese?"

"Cheese is a real food. Cottage cheese is a skim milk product, very rich in body building material, and is probably one of the most economical protein foods we have."

"As for its digestibility, cheese, either raw or carefully cooked, is as thoroughly digestible as other staple foods, and is not likely to produce physiological disturbances. In order that the diet may remain well balanced, cheese, if used in quantity, should replace foods of a similar composition, rather than supplement them. So many times cheese is made an accessory to the diet, instead of a prominent part of it. And what is more --"

"Say, Aunt Sammy!" said Uncle Ebenezer, suddenly, "just what is your idea in explaining all this to me?"

"Never mind. There's one more point, and that's about keeping cheese. It should be kept in a cool, well-ventilated place, wrapped in a slightly dampened cloth, or in paraffin paper. Occasionally, molds develop upon the surface of cheese. But the growth of mold does not make the cheese unfit for food. The moldy part should be cut away."

"Now, in conclusion, let me tell you eight reasons why cheese is a good food. First, it is one of the most nutritious of foods; second, it contains no waste; third, it is the basis of many dishes; fourth, it is pleasing in texture, flavor, and color; fifth, it gives variety to the diet; sixth, it has comparatively good keeping qualities; seventh, it is rich in the growth vitamin A; eighth - eighth - eighth --"

"What's wrong?" inquired Uncle Ebenezer. "Do you mean to say you've forgotten the eighth reason why cheese is a good food? Why Aunt Sammy, and I thought you were infallible!"

"Never mind," I said, "it will come to me after while. Perhaps while I'm cooking supper."

"Supper," said Uncle Ebenezer, "that sounds good. Let's have some ham for supper. Some ^{tried} ham with pineapple slices to go with it."

Here's the menu to please uncle Ebenezer.

Fried ham -- a good recipe for that in your cured pork leaflet. Do you own a cured pork leaflet? Well, fried ham, then mashed potatoes and gravy; fried pineapple; Brussel's sprouts or some other green vegetable; and, for dessert, lemon sponge and cookies.

Once more. Fried ham (see the cured pork leaflet.) Mashed potatoes and gravy. Fried pineapple slices. (See your green cookbook.) Brussel's sprouts or some other green vegetable; and, for dessert, lemon sponge and cookies.

Here's how to make fried pineapple slices:

Drain slices of canned pineapple and brown them very slowly in a heavy skillet in butter.

Tomorrow: Questions and Answers.

